

Minutes
Board of Supervisors
Work Session
March 12, 2015

Members Present: Johnny Woodward, Chairman At-Large
D. Keith Guzy, Jr., District 1
David Wiatrowski, District 2
J. D. Cave, District 3
Darrell Short, District 4
Dorothy F. Pendley, District 5

Staff Present: Amity Moler, County Administrator
Regina Miller, Assistant to the County Administrator

Call to Order:

Chairman Johnny Woodward called to order the budget work session of the Page County Board of Supervisors on March 12, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room located in the Page County Government Center, 103 South Court Street, Luray, noting a quorum was present.

FY 2016 Budget Update:

Mrs. Moler gave an update on the proposed FY2016 budget. She indicated that it is still early to give projections on the personal property, because the Commissioner of the Revenue is still compiling their book of values, which they obtain from the NADA. They are anticipating receiving the information from NADA in April. She pointed out that she had budgeted a 10% increase for health insurance rates, and after receiving the new rates it actually increased 9.7%. She had provided the Board with a handout regarding the building and zoning fees. She suggested that the fees be discussed further at the Board's work session on April 7th. It was consensus of the Board to place the fees discussion on the work session agenda. The bottom line of the proposed budget has not changed since she presented it at \$62,719,824.

Budget Presentations:

Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District:

Megen Dalton, District Manager, presented the budget request for the Shenandoah Valley Soil & Water Conservation District. She gave an overview of the activities and services offered by the District. She noted that the funding request for next year is \$6,000.

Virginia Regional Transit:

Darrel Feasel, Director of Business Development, explained that the Virginia Regional Transit operated public transportation in Page County from 2007 through 2010. They averaged about 612 per month riding the bus. He noted that they had three routes. The service ended because it was removed from the budget. He said that service that

was once provided in Page County could come back. It may not be the same service, but it could be similar. The proposed budget to operate one bus, eight hours per day at five days per week would cost about \$122,000 per year, with the average fare costing \$1.00, creating about \$8,000 in revenue, with the next project costing \$113,880. He said that the federal government will pay 50% of the deficit and the state government will pay about 18%. The County's share would be \$36,442. If the Board decides the fund the transit, the next step would be to contact the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

Massanutten Regional Library:

Lois Jones, Director, Massanutten Regional Library, said the Board has already heard a presentation regarding the budget for the Massanutten Regional Library and she was present to answer questions. She recapped that every five years the Library of Virginia does an evaluation of local funding of public libraries. When she became the Library Director five years ago, the library system ranked 86 out of 91 public libraries in the state in terms of local funding. This past year the system ranked 88 out of 91. In the summer of 2014, the evaluation was performed and the staff from the Library of Virginia met with her and laid out a funding plan for the next five years of what would be required among localities so the system would not lose state aid for the next five years. The amount received in state aid is \$362,000. She mentioned that the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County have agreed to meet the obligation over the next five year.

Supervisor Guzy mentioned that he has received numerous calls and emails asking the Board not to close the libraries. He asked who made the statement. Ms. Jones indicated that the library staff has not said anything publicly. She said they have never said that they are closing. She presented the information she received from the state and told people the dilemma. Supervisor Guzy said the Board members have not said they are closing the library. Last year, the Board increased the funding to the regional library by \$7,000. Ms. Jones indicated that the Shenandoah and Luray library boards support their own facilities.

Supervisor Cave asked how much of the \$170,981 request for next year comes back or stays in Page County with the Luray and Shenandoah libraries. Ms. Jones expressed that all of it does because it is their operating costs. Supervisor Cave asked if the Massanutten Regional Library system gives the two libraries more than \$170,981. Ms. Jones replied yes. She emphasized that if the funding is not met year after year then the system would have to pull away from Page. Harrisonburg and Rockingham are not willing to pick up the extra cost if Page does not continue to fund at the level required.

Fire Association:

David Huffman, Shenandoah Volunteer Fire Company, spoke on behalf of the three fire departments in the County. He said all three agencies are all volunteer. In order for a person to become a firefighter, they endure many months of training. To become certified by national standards, to outfit them with firefighter clothing, pager, radio, and an air mask, is over \$12,500 per person and this is the national average. Of that,

\$2,800 to \$4,000 is spent on training alone. In 2015, Luray Fire Department is replacing a 42 year old tanker, currently being built at a cost of over \$285,000. Stanley Fire Department has aging HVAC equipment, water and parking lot issues that they are going to address this year that will cost in excess of \$50,000. Shenandoah Fire Company is looking to replace its tanker at a cost of over \$300,000. They are asking the Board to consider a monetary increase to \$52,000 for each agency for next fiscal year. The last increase from the County was in the 2007-2008 fiscal year, which was increased from \$42,000 to the current level of \$45,000.

Sheriff's Department Budget:

Sheriff John Thomas presented the budgets for Bailiff, Sheriff, Investigations, Crime Prevention, Jail, Animal Control, and EOC/911. He noted that EOC/911, Crime Prevention, Animal Control and Sheriff budgets have been reduced. The Investigations budget was increased \$182,000, but it is all grant funding. The Jail is also increased because they are housing more inmates.

Transient Occupancy Tax Funding Requests:

Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce:

John Robbins, President, explained that the Chamber is requesting the same funding as this year of \$275,000 for next year. Broadly, the funding will be used similar as they have in the past several years. The funding helps them to operate the visitor's center seven days a week and refer tourists to the businesses and attractions they are interested in. Last year, they had about 18,000 tourists walk into the visitor's center, plus they answered about 5,400 tourist phone calls. The funding also allows them to conduct advertising and promotion campaigns in key tourism markets, particularly the DC Metro area, northern Virginia, Baltimore, and Richmond. They run a combination of print, radio, and on-line advertising. They have a 10-page tourism marketing plan that sets out the fundamental basis and philosophy for all their efforts to increase tourism. They also print 200,000 of their annual visitor guide and distribute it to more than 700 locations. Tourism is the most immediate economic benefit that is available to the County.

Page Valley Cycling:

Christopher Gould requested funding in the amount of \$7,000 for next fiscal year. He reviewed their schedule of cycling events for this year. He indicated that he is seeking money to help with marketing efforts but \$1,000-\$2,000 of the funding will be spent on overtime pay for the Sheriff's deputies working the events.

Luray Downtown Initiative (LDI):

Nancy Shifflett, Board of Directors, explained that LDI is requesting \$10,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund to enhance and sustain the Market Collective project. LDI is a non-profit organization and they do economic reconstructing, tenant advocacy, public relations, marketing event coordination, community support and program administration of the Main Street program. She then outlined the details of the Market Collective.

Performing Arts of Luray:

Brad Holsinger, Board Member of Performing Arts of Luray (PALS), requested \$5,000 from the County for their operations. He said that PALS is a non-profit organization managed by a volunteer Board of Directors and operated entirely by volunteers. He noted that \$5,000 from the Town of Luray was matched by a Virginia Commission of the Arts grant in the amount of \$5,000. If funding is received from the County, they will again work with the Commission of the Arts for matching funding.

Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Funding Discussion:

Mrs. Moler noted that in the current fiscal year, it was estimated that the County would receive \$620,000 in TOT funding. She anticipated that the County would meet its projection and could bring in additional funding. She noted that for FY 2016 she has estimated receiving \$650,000. The 2% that would go to the General Fund is \$260,000. At this point, she level funded every organization that is receiving TOT funds for next year. Many of the requests for funding had increased and if each were funded it would only leave a balance of \$6,808. If the Board level funds the organizations, it would leave a balance of \$32,308.

Adjourn: 9:10 p.m.

With no further business, Chairman Woodward adjourned the meeting.


Chairman


County Administrator